

PROJECT CLUSTER EVALUATION ON RURAL FINANCE in East and Southern Africa (ESA)

Learning event

19 July 2023

15.30 – 17.00 Nairobi time | 14.30 – 16.00 Rome time

Organized by

the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD in collaboration with
East and Southern Africa Division, IFAD



Project cluster evaluation: rural finance in East and Southern Africa Hybrid learning event 19 July 2023, 14.30-15.45 (CEST)

Concept note and provisional agenda

- Background.** The Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE) conducted a project cluster evaluation (PCE) on Rural Finance (RF) in East and Southern Africa (ESA) in 2022-2023. This PCE is the second of its kind, and it was introduced by IOE as a new evaluation product with the aim of enhancing learning aspects of project-level evaluations through comparative analyses of a small number of projects sharing common features. The main objectives of this PCE were to: i) assess the performance of selected RF projects; ii) draw out common findings and lessons to inform ongoing and future RF projects in ESA; and iii) Provide lessons on RF to be shared in IFAD.
- Objectives of the learning event and key audience.** Following the finalization of the PCE in 2023, IOE organized a hybrid learning event to: (i) share the main findings and lessons identified in the evaluation; and (ii) facilitate discussion and reflection on selected key issues (see below). The key expected audience is IFAD staff work on rural finance in ESA, and other project staff or practitioners working on the topic will also be invited.
- Modality.** The learning event, scheduled for 19 July 2023 from 14.30-16.00 (CET), will be organized in a hybrid webinar modality, with some of the participants physically meeting in the IFAD-ESA offices in Nairobi, and others connecting online. A provisional agenda is presented below. After an opening statement from ESA regional director and IOE Management, a presentation will be made by the IOE lead evaluator to share the main evaluation findings and lessons, which then will be followed by remarks by the evaluation's external reviewer, and by a panel discussion moderated by the lead evaluator. The participants will be invited to post comments and questions for the panelists or IOE. The event will be closed with remarks by ESA regional director.
- Key topics for discussion.** An overarching panel discussion topic is: "*How can IFAD improve its support to inclusive rural finance?*" Specific questions may include the following:
 - How can rural finance projects balance complex designs with effective implementation? (with specific examples of projects and practices)
 - What should IFAD do to enhance the performance of financial service providers on targeting and reporting? (with specific examples of projects and practices)

5. **Speakers**

External reviewer

- **Mr Calvin Miller** is an Agricultural Economist consultant and part-time small farmer with extensive experience in rural finance and investment in nearly 100 countries. He was Senior Officer and Leader of the Agribusiness and Finance Group of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO), having previously worked in agricultural finance and rural development in CARE and MEDA. He is author of numerous publications on agricultural finance and investment, and founded MicroVest, a global, social impact microfinance investment fund.

Panelists

- **Mr Jan Kerer** worked as an independent consultant for IOE on the Project Cluster Evaluation on rural finance in ESA. He is a rural and agricultural finance specialist with more than 20 years' experience on financial sector development across the globe, with a strong focus on Africa and Asia. Both as advisor and project director for GIZ (2003-2011) and as freelance consultant (since 2011), Jan has worked both with the public sector to develop sector strategies, policies and financial sector regulations as well as with the private sector to develop tailor-made financial products for poor segments of the rural population..
 - **Mr Francesco M. Rispoli** is IFAD Country Director in the East and Southern Africa Division. He is currently the Head of the IFAD Southern Africa Multi-Country Office in Johannesburg. Previously he was Country Director for Kenya, Rwanda and Tanzania. Previously, Francesco served as Senior Technical Specialist in the Sustainable Production, Markets and Institutions (PMI) Division of IFAD, where he promoted and supported financial sector development projects at all stages of design and implementation. He has also been leading IFAD's work on agricultural insurance for several years, which has allowed him to build a range of experiences in index-based agricultural insurance, collaborating on pilot projects; monitoring and evaluation; research and analysis on this challenging subject. Before joining IFAD, he worked with UNDP, first as the manager of the Microstart project and then as the Head of the Private Sector Development Unit. Previously, he worked as a manager in different consulting firms providing technical assistance to the European Commission.
 - **Mr Sauli Hurri** works as IFAD Senior Regional Technical Specialist based in Nairobi. He is the technical focal point on Rural Markets and Value Chains for IFADs operations across the Eastern and Southern African countries. Sauli joined IFAD from the ILO, where he worked as Project Manager for a WB-Financed programme in Lao People's Democratic Republic that facilitated small business access to commercial financing. Prior to this, he worked on value chain and rural private sector development with IFAD's Southeast Asia programme based in Vietnam, and he was engaged in NGO projects during his early career. Sauli holds a Master Degree on International Politics and Economics from Helsinki University, Finland.
6. **Background documents.** Relevant background documents will be posted as available on the IOE event website: (<https://ioe.ifad.org/en/w/learning-event-project-cluster-evaluation-on-rural-finance-in-east-and-southern-africa>).

LEARNING EVENT

PROJECT CLUSTER EVALUATION: RURAL FINANCE IN EAST AND SOUTHERN AFRICA (ESA)

Organized by the Independent Office of Evaluation (IOE)

Date: Wednesday 19 July 2023

Time: 14.30 to 16.00 CEST / 15.30 to 17.00 (Nairobi time)

Venue: IFAD-ESA office in Nairobi and Microsoft Teams

Note: for those attending in person in Nairobi, a coffee break will be served outside the meeting room before the start of the event (between 15.00 and 15.30)

PROVISIONAL AGENDA

3 min	Sara Mbago-Bhunu, Regional Director, East and Southern Africa Division (ESA), IFAD	Welcome remarks
3 min	Representative of management, Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE)	Opening remarks
10 min	Mikal Khan, Lead Evaluator, IOE	Presentation of key evaluation findings
5 min	Calvin Miller, external reviewer	Discussion of evaluation report: key takeaways for future projects
Panel discussion (each panellist will provide a response to each question)		
30 min	Question 1 (15 mins): how can rural finance projects balance complex designs with effective implementation? (with specific examples of projects and practices)	Question 2 (15 mins): what should IFAD do to enhance the performance of financial service providers on targeting and reporting? (with specific examples of projects and practices)
	Jan Kerer, Evaluation Consultant and Rural and Agricultural Finance Specialist	
	Francesco Rispoli, Country Director, ESA	
	Sauli Hurri, Senior Regional Technical Specialist on Rural Finance, Markets and Value Chains, Sustainable Production, Markets and Institutions Division (PMI), IFAD	
10 min	Open questions and discussion	Moderator: Mikal Khan, IOE
2 min	Sara Mbago-Bhunu, Regional Director, ESA	Closing remarks